

STATINTL

At Home

Washington

For the past weeks — or ever since the disaster in Cuba — the Central Intelligence Agency has propagandized the press to "prove" that the invasion failure was all the fault of the exile leaders. The CIA argument has covered two points, both demonstrably false: 1) There was no uprising in Cuba because the Revolutionary Council was "too right-wing," and 2) Castro's Communists were tipped off in advance by the loose talk of the exile leaders. Both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have already bought this line and are spreading it from their editorial pages. The rest of the press can be expected to follow suit.

The facts: 1) CIA imposed the leadership of Manolo Ray and José Miró Cardona, both ex-Fidelistas of extreme leftist views, by threatening to cut off all financial aid to the more moderate Cuban exiles, and 2) the Revolutionary Council was not informed of the landing site until the invasion forces were going ashore. Castro, however, knew where the landing was to take place and had his troops deployed and waiting. Had the exile leaders been told where CIA planned to land the invaders, moreover, they would have fought tooth and nail against it. As one exile leader said to me, "No one who knew the terrain would have chosen the Bahia de Cochinos for a landing. Obviously a CIA 'expert' looked at a map and made the decision. Even the Pentagon was shut out."

Administration censorship and Allen Dulles' missionary work among newspapermen willing to accept "consultants fees" might have kept the Cuban story buried and allowed CIA to pin the blame on the exile group. That it has leaked out is due to the tearful indignation of the Cubans themselves. The Pentagon, too, has added some pertinent facts of its own—the most significant being that it urged President Kennedy to give the invasion forces air and naval cover when the first bad news came in. Mr. Kennedy, however, preferred to listen to Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Ambassador Adlai Stevenson.

Much has been said about the effect on American prestige of the tragedy in Cuba. Domestically, however, the impact has been equally devastating—from the President's standpoint. The image, so carefully created during the election campaign, of courage, decisiveness, and knowledgeability has been badly damaged, if not shattered. Even the most devoutly pro-Kennedy members of the Washington press corps now speak of the President's inexperience, of his belief that words are a substitute for deeds, and of his fumbling inability to come to grips with problems. There are even some sniggers over boasts by the White House staff that Mr. Kennedy had done away with the cumbersome National Security Council and was

handling matters himself. The moment he got into bad trouble, he summoned the NSC and almost in panic called for its advice and assistance. That he also turned to the Republicans—conferring with General Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Herbert Hoover, and General MacArthur—is interpreted as a sign of weakness, not as an effort to forge a new national unity.

What Mr. Kennedy has discovered during his first One Hundred Days is that being President and facing up to the Communists is far more difficult than subjugating the Democratic Party or impressing the American people. He is also learning that a press release is no substitute for a foreign policy. But his response has been characteristic. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and Presidential aide Theodore Sorenson have been sprung from their duties to "study" U.S. foreign policy and to come up with some answers to extricate the President from the Cuban mess and the worsening situation in Laos. Whatever Bobby Kennedy's other faults, he may be a good choice for this job. He is cold, ruthless, and determined. And he realizes that his own political future is inextricably tied to his brother's.

Bobby's first task will be to look into the Central Intelligence Agency. The CIA has spent billions of dollars to carry out policies of its own—often at variance with those of the Executive or Congress. It gave aid to those who overthrew the government of Syngman Rhee, meddled in the internal affairs of friendly nations, and is still covertly working to bring about the admission of Red China into the United Nations. Though some of its activities are secret even to Director Allen Dulles, CIA has been a security sieve and its cloak-and-dagger operatives in the world's capitals are known to friend and foe alike. A thorough housecleaning is necessary before it will cease to be the laughing stock of the professional intelligence services and the press.

The Administration is aware of these facts and is trying quietly to cut Mr. Dulles out. At the same time, the White House has floated a trial balloon—the rumor that he will be succeeded by Bobby Kennedy. This will cause no tears at the State Department. But the political repercussions of such an appointment may be disastrous for the Kennedy administration. Espionage, counter-espionage, and the evaluation of intelligence information is a delicate task requiring experience and judgment. Bobby Kennedy has been too deeply engaged in politics for the past few years—and he is too young. One bobble as head of CIA and the jokes now current about nepotism in the Administration will lose all their humor. Add to this the increasing belief that he has a Svengali-like influence on the President—and an explosive situation can develop.

QUINCY